

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE****METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR AUTOMATIC E-MAIL RESPONSE  
INTERRUPTION BASED ON USER ACTIVITY**

The present invention provides a method, apparatus, and computer instructions for automatic e-mail response interruption based on user activity. An e-mail message having an "interrupt" type designation is sent from an originator, and directed to one or more recipients. The receiving e-mail client filters incoming messages and determines whether an e-mail contains an interrupt designation. If an interrupt designation is found, the e-mail client automatically displays content of the interrupt e-mail and any pending actions required of the recipient in a forefront position in the user interface, such as through a popup window. This content display may be valid until the recipient has responded to or completes the pending action specified in the e-mail. The present invention also analyzes the sender-recipient relationship to determine if the sender has the authority to issue an interrupt e-mail to the particular recipient. This authority may be predicated on user settings or an external list, such as a corporate directory.